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18 November 2004

MEX43180.E

Mexico: List of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that assist those having difficulty obtaining state protection (November 2004)

Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board, Ottawa

Civil society groups and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) covering a wide range of issues such as environmental concerns and women's issues reportedly increased in size and presence in Mexico during the 1990s (IPS 21 May 1998; see also Freedom House 23 Aug. 2004). Although an official government source has stated that there are 5,339 NGOs in the country (*Country Reports 2003* 25 Feb. 2004, Sec. 2b), the Inter Press Service (IPS) has suggested that 10,000 NGOs exist in Mexico (21 May 1998). With regard to NGOs that assist victims of human rights violations, however, the government agency responsible for liaising with civil society groups reported that "there were 979 human rights NGOs in the country" (*Country Reports 2003* 25 Feb. 2004, Sec. 4).

While *Country Reports 2003* mentioned that human rights NGOs were generally free to carry out their work unhindered by government authorities (ibid.), Amnesty International stated in its 2004 annual report that "human rights defenders and social activists continued to face politically motivated criminal charges, particularly at the state level where local prosecutors and judges remained subordinate to the executive". Moreover, Freedom House's 2004 *Freedom in the World* report for Mexico also noted that while "political and civic organizations" were able to operate freely in urban areas located in the north and central regions of the country, these organizations faced restrictions "throughout rural Mexico, in poor urban areas, and in poor southern states" (23 Aug. 2004).

The following list of NGOs was made using various Websites and documents from the IRB National Documentation Package for Mexico. This Response provides examples of three national NGOs and three state NGOs as well as some examples of Mexican NGOs that address political activities, criminality/corruption, sexual orientation and domestic violence. Please note that this list only provides examples of NGOs and is therefore not exhaustive. Where possible, NGO Websites are provided.

National NGOs

Miguel Agustin Pro Juarez Centre for Human Rights (Centro de Derechos Humanos "Miguel Agustin Pro Juarez," PRODH)

<<http://www.sjsocial.org/PRODH/>>

Originally founded to defend and promote civil and political rights in the 1980s and 90s, PRODH is now a multi-issue human rights NGO that addresses a number of issues such as defending the rights of HIV patients, "rights to health and to work," indigenous rights, and economic, social, cultural and environmental rights (PRODH n.d.a).

Based in Mexico City, the PRODH is involved with a number of other NGOs and institutions such as the National Network of Human Rights Civil Organizations "All Rights for All" (Red Nacional de Organismos Civiles "Todos los Derechos para Todos"), the Liaison Committee (Comite de Enlace) for the Technical Cooperation Agreement between the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Mexican government, and the Mexican Coalition for the International Criminal Court (Coalicion por la Corte Penal Internacional) (ibid. n.d.b).

Moreover, the PRODH has regional offices in the states of Oaxaca, Chiapas and Guerrero, and "[i]n some cases [the PRODH has] carried out coordinated work with the National Human Rights Commission (CNDH), the Human Rights Commission of the Federal District, and with some of the Human Rights Commissions [at] the state level, such as in Queretaro and Chiapas" (ibid.).

Mexican League for the Defence of Human Rights (Liga Mexicana por la Defensa de los Derechos Humanos, LIMEDDH)

<<http://www.derechos.org/limeddh/>>

Founded in 1985 in Mexico City, the LIMEDDH provides legal, psychological and medical assistance to victims of human right abuses (CNDH n.d.a). In addition, the LIMEDDH offers services such as human rights workshops

and training, an internet site and publicly accessible library facilities (ibid.). The LIMEDHH is a national organization and is also affiliated with international organizations such as the France-based International Federation for Human Rights (Fédération internationale des ligues des droits de l'homme, FIDH) (ibid.; LIMEDHH n.d.)

Mexican Commission for the Defence and Promotion of Human Rights (Comision Mexicana de Defensa y Promocion de los Derechos Humanos, CMDPDH)

<<http://www.cmdpdh.org/>>

Founded in December 1989, the CMDPDH provides a number of services related to the defence of human rights such as denouncing violations, investigating abuses, and communicating human rights concerns (CMDPDH n.d.). The CMDPDH is also a member of the FIDH and has consultative status with the United Nations (ibid.).

State-Level NGOs

Chiapas

Human Rights Centre "Fray Bartolomé de las Casas" (Centro de Derechos Humanos "Fray Bartolomé de las Casas," CDHFBC)

<<http://www.laneta.apc.org/cdhbcasas/>>

According to its own Website, the CDHFBC was established by the bishop of San Cristobal de Las Casas, Don Samuel Ruiz Garcia, in 1989 in order to "help and find solutions to human rights violations suffered by a large number of indigenous people in the region" (n.d.). In addition to raising awareness of human rights issues and documenting instances of abuse, the CDHFBC receives and investigates complaints of human rights violations (CDHFBC n.d.).

Guerrero

Human Rights Centre of the Tlachinollan Mountain (Centro de Derechos Humanos de la Montana Tlachinollan, CDH Tlachinollan)

<<http://www.laneta.apc.org/tlachinollan/>>

Officially established in 1993, the CDH Tlachinollan promotes and defends the rights of the indigenous groups of the mountains in Guerrero (CDH Tlachinollan n.d.). Specific areas of work include legal assistance, investigation and denunciation of human rights violations, as well as education (ibid.).

Tamaulipas

Centre for Border Studies and the Promotion of Human Rights (Centro de Estudios Fronterizos y de Promocion de los Derechos Humanos, CEFPRODHAC)

<<http://www.derechoshumanosenmexico.org>>

Established in the early 1990s and based in the city of Reynosa, the CEFPRODHAC receives human rights complaints, provides legal, medical and psychological assistance, and promotes human rights awareness (CEFPRODHAC n.d.). The CEFPRODHAC also maintains a documentation centre and carries out research into human rights-related issues (ibid.).

Political Activities

Civic Alliance (Alianza Civica, AC)

<<http://www.alianzacivica.org.mx/>>

Founded in April 1994, AC is an independent NGO that is mandated to ensure that elections in Mexico are fair, impartial, and transparent (AC n.d.). According to its Website, the AC carries out its work in conjunction with a number of other organizations and more than 20,000 volunteers across the country (ibid.).

Citizens' Movement for Democracy (Movimiento Ciudadano por la Democracia, MCD)

<<http://www.laneta.apc.org/mcd/mcd.htm>>

Founded in 1992 and based in Mexico City, the MCD is a non-partisan NGO mandated to contribute to the democratic process and respect for human rights in Mexico via electoral observation, citizen training and education, institutional strengthening and the defence of human and political rights (MCD n.d.; CNDH n.d.b). The MCD also registers electoral crimes and is affiliated with the AC (ibid.).

Criminality/Corruption

National Institute for the Support of Victims and Criminality Studies (Instituto Nacional de Apoyo a Víctimas y Estudios en Criminalidad, INAVEC)

Established in March 1998, the INAVEC is a national NGO that focuses on reducing levels of victimization and criminality in Mexico (CNDH n.d.c). In addition to providing legal and psychological services to victims of crime, the INAVEC carries out research on criminality (ibid.).

Mexican Transparency (Transparencia Mexicana, TM)

<<http://www.transparenciamexicana.org.mx/>>

As a chapter of the international organization Transparency International, TM's mandate is to pool the efforts of private corporations, civil society, academics and the government in order to fight against corruption in Mexico (TM n.d.). These efforts include education, promotion of a culture of respect for the rule of law and research in order to better understand the problem of corruption (ibid.).

Sexual Orientation

Cultural Gay Circle (Circulo Cultural Gay, CCG)

Founded in 1984, the CCG works on issues such as homophobic violence, violation of basic rights, and AIDS awareness (Democracy Now! 17 June 1998; see also MEX38203.E of 28 January 2002).

Citizens' Commission Against Homophobic Hate Crimes (Comision Ciudadana contra los Crimenes de Odio por Homofobia, CCCOH)

The CCCOH is a Mexico City-based organization that was founded in May 1998 to investigate and research homophobic hate crimes (Reding Dec. 2003; see also MEX42621.E of 15 April 2004). The CCCOH also presents workshops and distributes publications on topics related to homosexual and bisexual issues (Encuentro Hombres n.d.).

Lesbian Mothers' Group (Grupo de Madres Lesbianas, GRUMALE)

Established in 1995 (*El Universal* 3 Nov. 2004), GRUMALE provides support, counselling and legal assistance to lesbian mothers in Mexico City (GRUMALE 14 Jan. 2002; see also MEX38251.E of 21 January 2002).

Domestic Violence

Mexican Association Against Violence Towards Women (Asociacion Mexicana contra la Violencia hacia las Mujeres, COVAC)

COVAC provides training and disseminates information on sexual and family violence, addressing the problem from a social, emotional and legal perspective (*Amigos Contra el Sida* 11 Aug. 2000). It also offers psychological assistance to individuals and groups at its premises or over the phone and runs a documentation centre on the prevention of family violence (ibid.; see also the Research Directorate's March 2003 Issue Paper entitled *Mexico: Domestic Violence and Other Issues Related to the Status of Women*).

Margarita Magon Women's Support Centre (Centro de Apoyo a la Mujer Margarita Magon, CAM)

Founded in 1986 in Mexico City, the CAM is a national organization that provides legal, medical and psychological services to victims of sexual and domestic violence (*Isis Internacional* n.d.; see also *Revistafem* n.d.).

Association for the Integral Development of Rape Victims (Asociacion para el Desarrollo Integral de Personas Violadas, ADIVAC)

Based in Mexico City, ADIVAC was founded in 1990 and provides local support to victims of sexual violence (*Isis Internacional* n.d.). Its services include medical, legal and psychological assistance as well as workshops, courses and a documentation center (ibid.; see also *Revistafem* n.d.).

This Response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research Directorate within time constraints. This Response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim for refugee protection. Please find below the list of additional sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

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